

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANDY CLARKE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS
SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
May 16, 2007**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the League of American Bicyclists' 300,000 affiliates and members, and the 57 million adults who will ride a bike this year, I thank you for allowing me to speak with you regarding the considerable role cycling and walking can play in combating climate change and promoting energy independence.

This Friday, May 18th, tens of thousands of people in communities across the country will bicycle to work in celebration of National Bike to Work Day. In the Washington, D.C., area alone, more than 7,000 riders will converge on Freedom Plaza and other locations. If those 7,000 riders chose to drive to work instead of bicycling, they would generate 32 tons of carbon dioxide, one and a half tons of carbon monoxide, burn half a tanker truck full of gasoline, and they would do the same on the way home.

That's just one day, here in Washington. The potential to increase the numbers of people bicycling to work in the United States in the very near future is even more impressive. San Francisco and other cities more than doubled bicycle commuting between 1990 and 2000 through investment in bike lanes, trails, bike parking, maps, education programs, encouragement activities and a focused bicycle plan, however, there is much more we can do. The 2000 Census reported that there are 500,000 bicycle commuters in the United States – less than half of one percent of journeys to work and woefully short of the percentages in Canada (1.2%), the United Kingdom (2%), Germany (11%), Denmark (20%) and the Netherlands (27%).

Bicycling to work, moreover, is just part of the picture. We know that more than three quarters of trips made today aren't for commuting. They are social or recreational, for shopping or the like. Amazingly, the 2001 U.S. National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) tells us that in our metropolitan areas more than 40% of those trips are two miles or less – a very manageable bike ride – and more than one-quarter are just one mile or less.

Furthermore, the data shows that within the 28.3% of the trips that are one mile or less in urbanized areas, 65.7% are made by auto. This means that 18.6% of all trips in metropolitan areas are auto trips one mile or less. These short trips are the most polluting and the most feasible to switch to bicycling or walking. The city of Chicago recently adopted a 2015 goal of having 5% of all trips five miles or less made by bicycle. The federal government must encourage more urbanized areas to establish such goals.

Survey after survey shows that people want to ride and walk more but are dissuaded by concern over traffic danger and other barriers. In fact, a recent study conducted by the Shimano Corporation confirms the enormous latent demand for bicycling among the 160 million non-bicycling adults in America. When barriers to bicycling are removed, people start riding. As a case in point, Portland, Oregon, has seen bicycle use quadruple since 1994 as their bike network has grown from 60 miles to 260 miles. They have also invested in cyclist and motorist education, encouragement programs, simple measures such as providing bike parking, and fully integrating transit, walking and bicycling.

Many of the short car trips in our metropolitan areas are school-related; parents driving their children to and from school over very short distances. The Federal Safe Routes to School program created by SAFETEA-LU in 2005, is a welcome opportunity to change the habits of a generation of school children by enabling them to walk and bicycle to school – and we know from the initial Federal pilot project in Marin County that real mode shift is possible.

What else can Congress do today to encourage more people to walk and bicycle instead of automatically reaching for the car keys for all their trips?

1. Establish Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction targets that states and localities can meet by shifting short, polluting trips from automobiles to walking, bicycling and transit.
2. Congress can appropriate funding for the Conserve by Bicycle Program, which was authorized in the 2005 Energy Policy Act (PL 109-58). The program directs the USDOT to collect and analyze data to develop best practices to replace car trips with bicycle trips for short distances.
3. Congress should pass the Commuter Tax Benefit Act 2007, (H.R. 1498 and S 858). This legislation revises the tax code to allow employers to extend the transportation fringe benefit currently offered to transit, vanpooling, and qualified parking plans, to bicyclists.
4. Congress must ensure that any future rescissions of Federal transportation funds do not disproportionately hit bicycle and pedestrian funding sources. In 2006, for example, \$600 million were cut nationally from the Transportation Enhancement program.
5. Congress should direct the General Services Administration (GSA) to make the Federal government a model employer for promoting bicycling and walking to work.

6. In the next transportation reauthorization, Congress should codify the U.S. Department of Transportation “Design Guidance” on accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians so that every new and improved highway project is a “Complete Street.”

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, there has been much deliberation over the past few months in regards to addressing global climate change issues. Many new technologies and solutions have been brought forward as potential strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and oil consumption. We support a full range of strategies from congestion pricing to carbon taxes; from increased intercity and freight travel by train to road pricing. All of these have the potential to help shift travel to bicycling and walking – provided the two modes are considered from the outset.

To illustrate my point, on Friday you heard from the Secretary about the U.S. Department of Transportation’s proposed \$175 million congestion reduction initiative. You heard from the EPA Administrator whose agency has developed a detailed “wedge analysis” of the transportation sector. In neither case is there a reference or incentive to promote bicycling and walking as an option.

I urge you all, as you deliberate and work to provide leadership in this area, not to overlook simple, tried and tested, existing technologies – bicycling and walking. Unlike any of the other options presented to you as we move forward these two options will simultaneously address critical issues such as obesity, physical inactivity, traffic congestion, and air quality.

Thank you again for allowing me to comment on this very important issue, and I look forward to your questions.